

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 PC-10 AID-20 DRC-01 /121 W

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P R 030845Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3636

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2856OM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJ: POSSIBLE PRESS STORY ON PEACE CORPS

1. WASHINGTON POST REPORTER OBERDORFER HAS APPROACHED EMBASSY AND PEACE CORPS ON REPORT HE HAD RECEIVED FROM UNIDENTIFIED SOURCE RE POLICE QUESTIONING OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS. OBERDORFER SPECIFICALLY ASKED CONFIRMATION FROM EMBASSY AND PEACE CORPS THAT REPORT WAS CORRECT AND THAT EMBASSY HAD LODGED PROTEST WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY ON MATTER.

2. OBERDORFER WAS SIMPLY TOLD THAT MATTER HAD BEEN TAKEN UP WITH MOFA, THAT MOFA RESPONSE HAD BEEN APPROPRIATE AND THAT IT OUR UNDERSTANDING POLICE HAVE TAKEN CORRECTIVE ACTION.

3. FACTS OF MATTER ARE CONTAINED IN APRIL 19 ERICSON/RANARD LETTER AND ENCLOSED MEMCON. IN SUMMARY, THERE HAVE BEEN ABOUT 150 INSTANCES OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS WHO HAD BEEN DIRECTLY APPROACHED, PRIMARILY BY LOCAL POLICE AGENTS QUESTIONING THEM ABOUT THEIR ASSIGNMENTS, THEIR OFF-DUTY ASSOCIATES AND ATTITUDES. APPROACHES WERE OBVIOUSLY CONNECTED WITH GENERAL POLICE CRACKDOWN IN WAKE OF APRIL 3 EMERGENCY MEASURE. IN NONE OF THESE CASES WAS THERE ANY ATTEMPT TO DETAIN VOLUNTEERS. IN ADDITION, TO EMBASSY PROTEST TO MOFA, PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR ALSO TOOK MATTER UP WITH NATIONAL POLICE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECTION. AS A RESULT OF OUR
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ACTIONS, WE UNDERSTAND NATIONAL POLICE HAS INSTRUCTED LOCAL POLICE

OFFICERS TO CEASE QUESTIONING OF VOLUNTEERS.

4. OBERDORFER INDICATED HE WOULD FILE STORY ON THIS SUBJECT AND WE EXPECT IT TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL WITH PRIMARY FOCUS ON ROKG.

5. IF QUERIED BY PRESS, WOULD SUGGEST THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES ALSO LIMIT THEMSELVES TO CONFIRMATION THAT THERE WERE INSTANCES OF LOCAL POLICE QUESTIONING OF VOLUNTEERS, THAT WE DID BRING MATTER UP WITH GOVERNMENT, AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN.

HABIB

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Message Attributes

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